

entire supply of ground equipment is now deployed in the Middle East. The constant demands of combat and the treacherous terrain are wearing out equipment at up to nine times the usual rate.

America's military is overburdened, and now our Nation must seriously discuss how to best deploy our depleted forces against the dangers of our day.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In response to one of the earlier 1-minute speeches, the Chair must note that Members should direct remarks in debate to the Chair and not to the President.

GULF COAST HURRICANE HOUSING RECOVERY ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 254 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 1227.

□ 1039

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 1227) to assist in the provision of affordable housing to low-income families affected by Hurricane Katrina, with Mr. CARDOZA (Acting Chairman) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Tuesday, March 20, 2007, amendment No. 53 printed in part B of House Report 110-53 by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN), as modified, had been disposed of.

□ 1040

AMENDMENT NO. 6 OFFERED BY MR. NEUGEBAUER

The Acting CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 6 printed in part B of House Report 110-53.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 6 offered by Mr. NEUGEBAUER:

Strike section 306 (relating to transfer of DVP vouchers to voucher program).

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 254, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER) and a Member opposed each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Chairman, this is a pretty simple and straightforward amendment. It just simply just strikes section 306 from this bill.

What we do in this legislation already is we extend many of the vouchers for the disaster voucher program. But what we are trying to do in this bill is not only just say we want to extend them, but that we want to make them permanent.

Actually, this is not the place to debate whether we need to add additional vouchers to the voucher section 8 program. One of the concerns I have about this is that the scoring on this is an additional authorization of \$735 million, nearly three-quarters of \$1 billion. We are not opposed to debating whether we need to add additional vouchers or change the formula in the future, but this is not the place to do that.

What I said yesterday and continue to say is we are using these disaster programs to push forward things that other people have been working on in other agendas and trying to do this on the backs of the people that have suffered a great disaster.

One of the things I want to go back to is the fact that we stated yesterday that it's not like this Congress has not responded to the people in Louisiana and Mississippi; \$110 billion has been authorized by this Congress for the disaster relief, and \$116.7 billion in CDBG money has been provided to give flexibility for the housing needs of the people in this area.

When we go back to the city of New Orleans itself prior to the hurricane, we had 7,000 public housing units in New Orleans, and 2,000 of those were already scheduled to be torn down, and 5,100 were online, and not all of those occupied. Now approximately 2,000 units already have been repaired, 1,200 have been returned.

Ten billion dollars has been allocated to the Road Home Program in Louisiana. Let me repeat that, \$10.5 billion authorized, \$300 million spent, a full 3 months after the hurricane.

The problem making these vouchers permanent is we are giving preference to folks that are living in communities where other people have been in line. One of the things that I think there is a misconception on is we have talked the last few days about what is going on in New Orleans and what the future is. In 2019 or thereabouts, New Orleans will celebrate its 300th anniversary. For 300 years, that community has been building to what it was pre-Katrina.

There is some misconception in the next 6 months by extending some of these programs and moving forward that all of a sudden everything is going to be back to normal in New Orleans. That is not going to be the truth.

What we need to do is begin to build the housing back, letting that go forward. I know that yesterday, the distinguished chairman said, well, the reason we have to go back and get the units back in order is so that is not keeping them from building new units. In fact, it is. The fact is, we can't tear down some of those units. That is the very land that we are talking about

going back and reusing. It doesn't make sense to me to go back and rebuild all of these units or remodel them, only to come back eventually and have to tear them down so that we can do the new planned communities.

We should go back to the basic tenets of this bill. The basic tenets of this bill was to hopefully get off high center those few glitches that, quote, the leadership in New Orleans and Louisiana say is keeping them from moving their reconstruction forward. It hasn't stopped the people in Mississippi, but for whatever reason, it has stopped the people in Louisiana and moved forward.

Mr. Chairman, we should not extend permanently these vouchers. This is not the form for that. It's not appropriate, it's not fiscally responsible for us to do that. We have extended those vouchers to meet the current needs of some of the folks. We really don't even know how much people will think about returning. But one of the things about making these vouchers permanent, I believe you will ensure that some of these people don't return because many of them have moved on to other places.

Now, we are saying we are going to make your vouchers permanent. We are going to put you in front of people that have been in those communities for a number of years and have been waiting in line to be eligible for this very assistance.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The gentleman from Texas once again referred to an earlier amendment from yesterday, but trying to understand this particular amendment has nothing to do with whether you construct or destruct or replace public housing. What this says is the following: There were people who were living in the gulf area who were receiving some form of assistance under HUD programs. Some of them lived in public housing, some of them were in vouchers, some of them were living in subsidized housing for the elderly and the disabled. The places where they were living were washed away in the most literal, physical sense.

We all agree that we have not yet, in the gulf area, replaced that housing. It's true there have been slowdowns, for instance, in Road Home money in New Orleans. But in Mississippi earlier this year, the Oreck Vacuum Company, which to its credit had tried to help the people in the gulf by reopening a factory that the company had in the gulf, shut the factory down because, they explained, the shortage of housing made it impossible for them to recruit